

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 20, 1999

Projects Reviewed

SDC Retreat 1999
New Covenant Christian Center Expansion
Gorge Inn Adaptive Reuse Study
Neighborhood Plans: Eastlake, Greater Duwamish,
Green Lake, Crown Hill/Ballard
University Prep ROW Improvements

Convened: 8:00am

Adjourned: 5:15pm

Commissioners Present

Rick Sundberg, chair
Moe Batra
Gail Dubrow
Robert Foley
Jeff Girvin
Jon Layzer
Peter Miller

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Peter Aylsworth
Rebecca Walls

052099.1 Project: **Seattle Design Commission Retreat 1999**
Time: 4 hr (SDC Ref. # DC000)

The Design Commission held its annual retreat to discuss the 1999/2000 work plan and the direction of the new Design Center. The retreat was divided into two half-day sessions, with the second day scheduled for June 3rd.

052099.2 Project: **Commission Business**

Action Items:

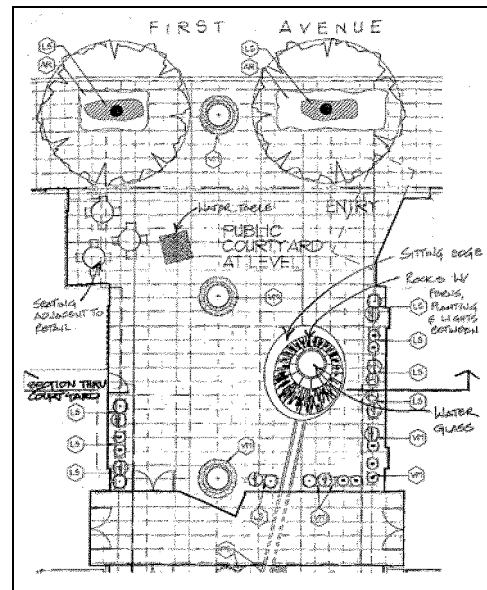
- A. MINUTES OF THE MAY 20TH MEETING: Approved as amended.

Discussion Items:

- B. LIGHT RAIL REVIEW PANEL UPDATE: The LRRP will have a retreat on Wednesday, June 10th.

- D. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Intracorp First & Broad Development - The subcommittee reviewed changes to the proposal in response to previous Commission comments. These changes included removal of the curved screen, opening the entire courtyard to the public. Seating, stones, and plantings have been added around the "water glass" sculpture. Public seating was added adjacent to the retail space. The subcommittee recommended approval of the proposal to the full Commission. The full Commission recommends approval of the project based on the subcommittee report and recommendation.



Courtyard plan

- E. COUNCIL MEETINGS UPDATE: The City Council has requested quarterly briefings from the Design Commission and Design Center regarding current projects and design related issues.
- F. CIVIC CENTER MASTER PLAN: The City Council will take action on the Civic Center Master Plan next week.

052099.3 Project: **New Covenant Christian Center Expansion**
 Phase: Street Vacation
 Presenters: David Bolin, Freehold Group
 Nils Finne, Finne Architects
 Tony Morris, New Covenant Church
 Attendees: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Transportation
 Paul Janos, Design, Construction & Land Use
 Timothy Myhr, Finne Architects
 Time: 1 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00063)

The New Covenant Christian Center (NCCC), currently located at 7930 Rainier Avenue South, proposes to vacate the northern portion of Wolcott Avenue South and the alley between Wolcott and Rainier Avenues. The vacations are necessary for the site to accommodate the building areas and adjacencies. The building site is an undeveloped, five-acre parcel with the existing church facility located at the northern edge. The site is bounded by Rainier Avenue South and South Rose Street.

The proposed development would consist of a phased building program totaling 66,000 square feet of new building area. The first phase of development will incorporate a school, gymnasium, and offices. The second phase will include a new sanctuary. The buildings will be arranged in an “L” shaped configuration around an open, landscaped courtyard that opens onto Rainier Avenue.

The most public facilities have been located along Rainier Avenue with the school to the east and the parking area at the eastern edge. The project opens up to the community by placing the gymnasium, courtyard, and sanctuary lobby along the Rainier Avenue frontage.

The street and alley vacations requested by NCCC are consistent with the goals established by the City of Seattle as follows:

1. The public trust is protected because there is no degradation of circulation or access. Currently there are no improved streets or alleys there now. These Right of Way's are not improved, are not needed for traffic flow, they dead end and not utilities have been located in the ROW. The site will not be built out to the maximum density allowed by zoning which will preserve light, air, and open space.
2. The public and civic environment will significantly benefit by the expansion of NCCC in many ways:
 - The existing Montessori school at the church will grow from 25 students to 150 students.
 - A high school-sized gymnasium with basketball courts and locker rooms will be available to young people in the area to exercise in a safe environment.
 - Rooms will be made available in the evenings for ESL classes, teen pregnancy counseling, domestic violence education, substance abuse counseling, financial planning, health awareness, small business development and other community related services.
 - The expansion will transform a blighted area by removing several dilapidated buildings located on Rainier Avenue South as well as clean up a large area of brush and blackberry bushes that is a breeding ground for rodents and other pests.
3. A church of this caliber will by its very nature prevent adverse land use effects.

NCCC has spent the last four years assembling the parcels are now proposed for this project as required to create a contiguous site of sufficient size. Simultaneously they have explored several alternative options for accommodating future growth. The proposed street vacations are

necessitated by the following:

- The site is bisected by the street and alley ROW's that disrupts the contiguity of the entire property.
- Without the vacations, there isn't enough buildable area to accommodate the buildings and associated parking.
- No public benefit would be derived from improving these ROW's as streets because they are not needed for access to this or adjacent properties.
- The ROWs dead-end at NCCC's property. If improved, they would allow access directly to the church's property and would significantly compromise after hours security of the buildings and grounds.
- If the ROWs were improved as usable streets, traffic would be introduced immediately next to the church's school and play area, creating a new safety hazard for children.

Discussion:

- Barnett:** There are a number of technical issues regarding land ownership and transfer. Scale is another major issue in terms of placing an institutional campus development in a single-family residential neighborhood.
- Janos:** My initial concerns, based only on written documentation of the project, regarding the limitation of access to adjacent parcels seem to have been addressed by the proposal. The land ownership issues will need to be resolved in order to assess the accessibility of various parcels.
- Foley:** What are the lots zoned for?
- Finne:** The zones include NC 240, which allows for development of the church and gymnasium, and SF 5000, which allows for church and parking development.
- Dubrow:** How does the proposed development respond to the scale and character of the surrounding residential neighborhood?
- Finne:** The buildings have been broken into individual clusters that have a more residential scale and the necessary larger volumes are located along Rainier Avenue. The fenestration and detail will be developed further in the design development phase, but we intend to add a layer of scaling elements to the facades that respond directly to the surrounding context.
- Layzer:** Have design alternatives without the vacations been explored?
- Bolin:** The church has explored expansion options on other sites but it wants to remain in the neighborhood. Alternative designs haven't been developed.
- Dubrow:** Design alternatives without the vacation must be explored and evaluated by the Commission as established by city policy.
- Layzer:** Is there a possibility of maintaining the diagonal street grid even if the vacation is granted?
- Finne:** I agree with the philosophy of preserving the street grid as a clear network of public space, but it is common to adjust the grid in places where it doesn't function. Without the vacation the parcels create two rectangular and two triangular lots that can't accommodate the uses and adjacencies necessary for the project. It becomes a series of disjointed pieces that don't work together.
- Bolin:** The platted residential parcels are 70 years old and have never been developed with housing.
- Miller:** There is a potential for the campus to be isolated if services are not easily accessible and if open spaces are perceived as private spaces.
- Bolin:** The community is aware of the proposed facilities and welcomes the development.
- Girvin:** Will the existing church facility remain? How will it be used and accessed?

- Morris:** Yes, the existing church will remain. We have discussed with community members the possibility of converting it into community meeting spaces with some offices. The access to facilities will also remain.
- Sundberg:** The scheme is elegant architecturally and the public services are very welcome, but I have concerns about the lack of physical elements that welcome the public into the complex while forming visual connections back into the community. I think that the diagonal orientation of Wolcott Avenue offers potential connections with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Morris:** I am unfamiliar with the architectural means of welcoming the community into the facilities, but our church has formed connections with community members through strong relationships. Sustaining these relationships is the most important way for us to welcome the community.
- Dubrow:** Perhaps a way to test the architectural expression of those connections is to judge how a non-member of the church would perceive and experience the facility. Will the Rainier Avenue courtyard be perceived as a private space or a public space.
- Finne:** There will be significant public entries into the gymnasium, church, and courtyard from Rainier Avenue. I don't understand the justification for using the diagonal geometry. The configuration of buildings currently responds to Rainier Avenue.
- Dubrow:** The diagonal orientation of Wolcott Avenue can penetrate the complex as a way of welcoming the public. I don't think the buildings have to be arranged along the diagonals.
- Foley:** There remain scale and integration issues to resolve in this project. One possible approach may be to locate the public service components of the program toward the perimeter.
- Action:** **The Commission acknowledges the economic investment and social contributions this project will make to the community. The Commission recommends that the urban design amenities be further developed and makes the following comments and recommendations. The Commission**
- **recommends more specific physical and visual connections to the adjacent neighborhood,**
 - **encourages further development of landscape and open space solutions that reflect the diagonal pattern of the existing streets, and**
 - **recommends that public services be located at the perimeter of the complex for maximum visibility and accessibility.**

052099.4 Project: **Gorge Inn Adaptive Reuse Study**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Beth Blattenberger, Seattle City Light
 Rhoda Lawrence, Boyle Wagoner Architects
 Lanie J. McMullin, Subconsultant, market analysis
 Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00010)

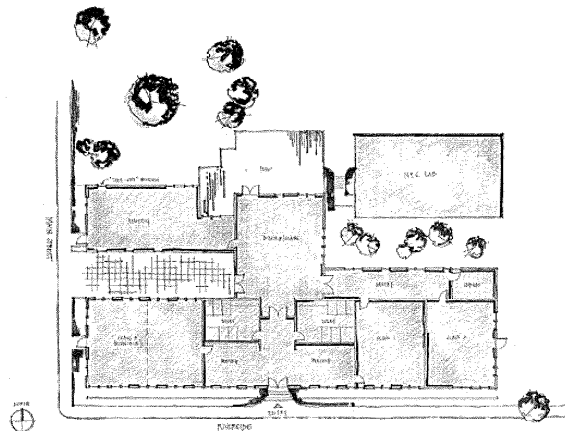
The Gorge Inn is the principle contributing resource to Newhalem's Main Street historic district, which is listed on the National Register. It was originally constructed in the 1920's as a mess hall for employees, and underwent several additions in later years. It soon became the base for the Skagit tours. As tourism declined after World War II and the base for the tours was moved to Diablo, the Inn fell into disrepair.

The Gorge Inn now has the opportunity to meet community and regional needs while being protected as a historic resource. The feasibility study includes two alternative uses for the Inn.

Alternative One:

Arts Camp and Education Facility

This alternative would include classroom spaces, dining, and gallery space for arts camp participants. It would function as a direct clientele destination point that is not reliant on tourist traffic. The alternative has support from nearby communities but Newhalem residents have concerns about the potential number of visitors during peak times. This alternative would also require use of additional Newhalem buildings.

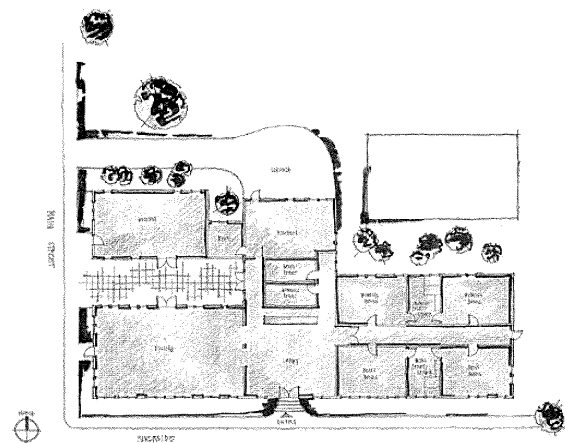


Plan of art education facility

Alternative Two:

Lodging/Dining/Hospitality Facility

This alternative would include a thematic bakery and restaurant with hostile style accommodations for travelers, such as bicyclists. There are currently no sleeping or eating accommodations east of Marblemount on the west side of the Cascades. This alternative has support from Newhalem community members and requires no additional building support.



Plan of lodging facility

Discussion:

- Dubrow:** Did the range of alternatives also include non-tourism based development?
- McMullin:** Newhalem is currently a town of only 75 people and is relatively unstable. Tourism based business is the only viable economic use for the inn.
- Dubrow:** If tourism is the only viable use, then I wonder if residents of nearby towns are the right people to have on focus groups for analyzing alternatives. There may be conflicting interests within the groups regarding what is developed in Newhalem.
- McMullin:** Our objective was to get input and involvement from the neighboring towns as a starting point. We want to develop good relationships with nearby residents.
- Dubrow:** A focus group consisting of bicyclists may be helpful in developing the bicycle hostile alternative.
- McMullin:** We have involved various bicyclist groups as well and have gotten feedback regarding the different alternatives. Newhalem is a popular place to stop, but offers travelers and bicyclists no lodging. Out of all the various organizations contacted regarding potential uses of the inn, the art-camp groups and the bicyclist groups seemed the most interested.
- Dubrow:** What is Seattle City Light's long-term commitment toward this building and other historic properties?
- Blattenberger:** We are having a meeting regarding the feasibility study next week. Staff have mixed feelings about how to deal with this building. I personally think that interest in Newhalem and the surrounding area will grow and that its unique character will attract visitors. The National Park Service is also a very important neighbor to consider. The short tourist season, typically about four months in length, is one of the major problems with developing a tourist-based use.
- Dubrow:** The Gorge Inn is a significant building in a town owned by Seattle City Light. I am concerned that City Light's commitment to managing its historic resources may not be carried out in the daily maintenance of individual structures. Other cities have set up mechanisms for leasing their historic properties to community groups at extremely low rates in return for the groups maintaining and using the facilities.
- Layzer:** I think that City Light, with projects like the Environmental Education Center at Diablo, is making great steps toward good stewardship of its historic resources. It seems like a mixed program of arts and recreation may offer the most opportunities for preserving the Gorge Inn.
- Lawrence:** There is also a branch of the Seattle Public Library going in at Newhalem.
- McMullin:** The surrounding community members supported the art-camp idea.
- Lawrence:** The art-camp program may also be able to take advantage of existing shop facilities at Newhalem.
- Action:** **The Commission appreciates that Seattle City Light conducted the feasibility study and supports City Light's objective of revitalizing the historic Gorge Inn through an adaptive reuse of the facility. The Commission recommends that City Light's stewardship of the Gorge Inn continue to enhance local businesses in the surrounding communities. The Commission continues to have concerns regarding City Light's undefined commitment to the protection of its historic resources.**

052099.5 Project: **Neighborhood Plans: Crown Hill/Ballard, Green Lake, Eastlake, Greater Duwamish**
 Phase: Briefing
 Presenters: Jill Novik, Department of Neighborhoods
 Time: .5 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00039)

Crown Hill/Ballard Neighborhood Plan

Primary elements of the plan include the:

- design and construction of the Ballard Municipal Center
- design and installation of community kiosks in the neighborhood
- retention of the 1% for-the-arts funds from Ballard projects for use in Crown Hill/Ballard
- commission and installation of public art

Discussion:

Dubrow: How will the artists be selected?

Novik: The artists will be selected through a competitive process. The Seattle Arts Commission may be involved.

Dubrow: Will the plans involve public—private partnerships for various projects?

Novik: Public—private partnerships are a possibility. Another issue in Ballard is a lack of open space and an increasing number of residents.

Green Lake Neighborhood Plan Art Elements

Primary elements of the plan include:

- reclaiming portions of Woodlawn Avenue North
- construction of a new central plaza on the east side of Green Lake
- creation of habitat areas by daylighting existing streams and waterways
- adaptive reuse of the existing opera theater

Discussion:

Foley: Will the city need to acquire the open parcels around Woodlawn Avenue?

Novik: The city may need to acquire those parcels as well as some on the west side of the lake. Community members would also like a central plaza on the east side of the lake, reclaim portions of Woodlawn Avenue, daylight existing streams to create habitat, and reuse the opera theater.

Eastlake Neighborhood Plan Art Elements

Primary elements of the plan include:

- maintaining the “country lane” character of Fairview
- maintain the rustic character of the neighborhood with no new curbs or gutters
- retain the ROWs extending into Lake Union as public swimming areas
- install a median planting strip on Eastlake Avenue
- explore potentials for an off-leash dog area at the south end of Eastlake Avenue

Greater Duwamish Neighborhood Plan

The Greater Duwamish Neighborhood Plan is focused on maintaining the current character of the neighborhood. The primary improvement objective of the plan is getting the mural program up and running

Discussion:

- Layzer:** How is the Link Light Rail addressed in the plan?
- Novik:** The light rail proposal is a real issue. Traffic obstructions and disruption of freight connections are major issues.
- Dubrow:** I encourage Neighborhood Planning staff to contact Design Commission staff as major urban design elements come up.
- Rahaim:** The neighborhood scale civic projects will be reviewed by the Commission.
- Action:** **The Commission appreciates the briefing.**

052099.6 Project: **University Prep ROW Improvements** (Subcommittee Foley, Girvin)
 Phase: Update
 Previous Review: December 17, 1998
 Presenters: Roger Bass, University Preparatory Academy
 Don Carlson, Carlson Architects
 Drew Gangnes, Skilling Ward Magnusson Barkshire
 Tom McCracken, University Preparatory Academy
 Walter Schacht, Walter Schacht Architects
 Barbara Swift, Swift & Company
 Attendees: Jane Johnson, Wedgwood Community Council
 Craig Klinkam, Klinkam Company
 Larry Knutson, Seattle Transportation
 Lana Lisitsa, Carson Architects
 Marylou Whiteford, Parks & Recreation
 Time: 1.25 hr. (SDC Ref. # DC00055)

The primary changes to the project since the previous review focus on the south edge of 80th Avenue and connections to Dahl Playfield. A sidewalk is provided on both sides of the street. The sidewalk has been shifted to the south and dropped to the level of the play fields with ADA compliant slopes at each end for access to both play fields. A retaining wall and railing separate the sidewalk from the angled parking along the south side of 80th Avenue as required by the grade change. Between the parking spaces and the retaining wall fence will be a "grass-crete" type of paving.

The elevated mid-block crossing will terminate in two sets of stairs down to the play fields. Between the stairs will be a sloped grass sitting area and a low seat wall along the south edge.

The project is currently awaiting written comments from the meeting with Seattle Transportation on May 3rd. The project is scheduled for construction to begin by mid-July with the major NE 80th improvements, such as grading, retaining walls, and detention, to be completed prior to the start of the 1999/2000 school year in September. The final street improvements, curbs, final paving, and landscaping, will be completed in summer 2000 after on-site work is complete.

Discussion:

- Foley:** What are Seattle Transportation staff's concerns regarding the proposed improvements?
- Knutson:** Seattle Transportation staff have concerns regarding the raised mid-block crossing, the use of angled parking on the north side of 80th Avenue, and the tight space between the angled parking and the fence on the south side of the street. Initial recommendations included changing the angled parking on the north side of the street to parallel parking and installing standard crosswalks in place of the proposed mid-block crossing.
- Bass:** Most of the pedestrian use occurs during school hours while the peak parking hours are in the late afternoon and evening.
- Layzer:** The form and character of the crosswalk should be based on its use. Raised crosswalks have worked in other locations with less pedestrian and more vehicular traffic.
- Schacht:** Since 80th Avenue is a dead-end street, vehicular traffic is limited to users of the adjacent facilities.

- Carlson:** All of the proposed ROW improvements cue drivers that they are entering an area with many pedestrians. The standard ten foot wide crosswalk is not sufficient to handle the number of pedestrians crossing the street.
- Layzer:** Have you explored locating the ADA compliant access south of the crosswalk?
- Swift:** Yes. That is what we originally presented to Parks Department staff. Locating the ADA compliant access at the east and west ends, nearer the ball fields, helps the Parks Department achieve their goal of encircling the park with accessible paving. Staff also desired that the sidewalk be entirely on Parks property where possible.
- Whiteford:** The accessible paths along the play fields were a bonus for Parks, not a requirement of the project.
- Layzer:** These improvements appear to offer three primary benefits to the city. The first is an improved and accessible edge between the parking and the street. The second is an improved and formalized parking configuration along the street. It would be unfortunate to lose some parking spaces with parallel parking, but that should not mean the project is abandoned. The third benefit is a formalized mid-block crossing that increases pedestrian safety and visually links the school with the park.
- Foley:** Given the dead-end nature of 80th Avenue and the fact that drivers here have higher awareness of pedestrians crossing 80th Avenue, the wide and elevated crossing seems appropriate in this situation and may require special consideration.
- Girvin:** I support the elevated crossing with special paving patterns and materials and bollards at the ends. An elevated crossing is a viable means of cueing drivers for a significant pedestrian connection. If the crossing is not elevated, the special paving patterns and materials should remain. I have concerns regarding the limited space between the angled parking at the south side of 80th Avenue and the retaining wall fence. The “grass-crete” material probably won’t encourage people to walk on it and the access to the play fields is tenuous and indirect. There is a lot of program fit into a small space. Parallel parking along the north edge of 80th Avenue may free up more space to explore other connection opportunities at the south edge.
- McCracken:** This scheme shows 45 degree parking spaces. We could use 60 degree spaces at the south edge and parallel parking at the north edge, but would have fewer total spaces. This plan attempts to maximize the amount of available parking.
- Knutson:** A non-elevated crossing with curbs and special paving patterns would eliminate the need for bollards at each end and would warn pedestrians that they are entering a vehicular zone.
- Action:** **The Commission subcommittee supports the project’s objectives of increasing pedestrian safety and parking organization. The subcommittee**
- encourages exploration of parallel parking alternatives on one side of 80th Avenue with angled parking on the other side,
 - recommends that the left over ROW width be used in exploration of alternative edge conditions and connections to the sports fields,
 - advocates the use of special paving patterns and materials within the mid-block crossing,
 - prefers raised crossing of sufficient width to have a significant visual presence on the ROW.
- Commissioner Layzer abstained.**